

The Chester County Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Fund

Administered by the Chester County Community Foundation

In cooperation with regional funders, donors, united funds and County government departments

Recognizing the importance of the nonprofit sector to the high quality of life throughout Chester County, the Chester County Commissioners have allocated \$3.5M to help nonprofits recover with innovation and resiliency. This funding is from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Per the CARES Act, grants must cover unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the COVID-19 public health emergency. **This includes grants to implement and publicize the safe resumption of programs and services.** The Community Foundation seeks proposals to support innovative, resilient COVID recovery needs, such as:

- Program and service redesign, in light of social distancing and public safety requirements
- Innovative technology to support virtual, mobile and/or pop-up programs and services
- Redesigned and reconceived marketing, fundraising and special events
- Strategic planning pivoting, refinement and revisions in light of COVID-19
- Partnership, merger, consolidation and/or acquisition activities due to COVID-19 impacts
- Infrastructure improvements due to COVID, including plexiglass dividers, technology upgrades, etc.
- Higher operating costs related to cleaning and social distancing requirements
- Other one-time or increased expenses incurred related to COVID-19.

This is a competitive, time-sensitive grants process. Grant decisions will be made weekly, on an ongoing basis. Electronic grant applications are only accepted by e-mail. No paper applications are accepted.

Eligibility

- Nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization formed and active in 2017 or earlier
- Nonprofit must be headquartered and providing services in Chester County, as evidenced by legal address in Box C of IRS 990

Priority Preference for Grant Funding

- Nonprofits that provide clear evidence of how they aim to/are reshaping their programs, services, administration, marketing and fundraising, to safely provide services and thrive in light of COVID impacts
- Nonprofits with substantial costs to comply with COVID public health requirements
- Nonprofits that serve a diverse constituency, and are governed and managed by diverse leadership

Ineligible Entities

- Nonprofits NOT headquartered in Chester County, PA, as evidenced by the legal address in Box C of the IRS 990
- Nonprofits NOT delivering services in Chester County
- Nonprofits that did NOT experience revenue loss due to the coronavirus pandemic and/or nonprofits that have no additional costs associated with the coronavirus pandemic
- Nonprofits that were NOT operational as of December 30, 2017
- Government or government-owned or controlled entities
- Churches or religious organizations with respect to their primarily religious activities and/or their activities which limit participation to members of the church or religious organization
- For-profit businesses
- Private clubs/organizations that limit membership for reasons other than capacity
- Nonprofits primarily engaged in lobbying or political activities
- Nonprofits NOT compliant with all federal, state, & local laws, including taxation
- Nonprofits NOT compliant with current public health guidelines, including coronavirus pandemic phased reopening restrictions ###





**Chester County Nonprofit
Innovation & Resiliency Fund
Grant Request Form**

Contact Information

Nonprofit Org Name: American Helicopter Museum and Education Center	ED/CEO Name: Allison Titman
Address: 1220 American Blvd	ED/CEO E-mail: atitman@americanhelicopter.museum
City, State Zip: West Chester, PA	Board Chair Name: Marc Sheffler
Phone: 610-436-9600	Grant Proposal Contact Name: Allison Titman
Website: americanhelicopter.museum	Grant Proposal Contact E-mail: see above
EIN: 23-2744831	Grant \$ Amount Requested: \$10,000
Year Founded: 1993	

In filing this application, the nonprofit certifies that it complies with all federal, state & local laws, including taxation; complies with current public health guidelines; and complies with coronavirus pandemic phased reopening restrictions.

Agreed by: Allison Titman	Date: October 21, 2020
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Nonprofit Field/s of Interest

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arts, Culture & Historic Preservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment & Animal Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services

Figures	Current	PRE-COVID (as of 1/1/20)
Annual Operating Budget	\$309,000	\$579,280
Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff	2.5	#4.75
# Board Volunteers	15	#15
# Committee Volunteers	4	#4
# Active Direct Service Volunteers	12	#50
Annual Volunteer Hours	1200	12404

Funding: Please indicate if your nonprofit has received funding from any of these regional sources over the past few years. We will invite them to review this funding request.

<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Comm Fdn	<input type="checkbox"/> Brandywine Health Fdtn	<input type="checkbox"/> United Way ChesCo	<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Comm Devel
<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Fund/W&Girls	<input type="checkbox"/> Phoenixville Comm Health Fdtn	<input type="checkbox"/> United Way S ChesCo	<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Other significant funders:			<input type="checkbox"/> ChesCo Dept Human Svcs

Narrative: In a few concise paragraphs, please explain:

1. Mission

The mission of the American Helicopter Museum and Education Center is to preserve rotary-wing aviation history, educate society on helicopters and their missions, and inspire future generations.

2. What geographic area is served? (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)

The Museum attracts visitors from a broad geographic range, including internationally, but its core visitation is regional. Our visitors come from within Chester County as well as from the surrounding areas. There is a strong local history of innovation in rotary-wing aviation and a strong presence of ongoing helicopter manufacture by companies like Sikorsky, Boeing, and Leonardo. This provides an audience that is enthusiastic about the Museum's subject

matter and supportive of our efforts to use helicopters as a gateway to STEM education. We are also a popular destination for local families looking for a fun, educational place to visit and a source of STEM enrichment for their children.

3. What population is served? How have your service numbers been impacted by COVID?

As noted above, the Museum attracts and serves a broad base of visitors and program participants. General visitation spans all age groups from infants to seniors, while our education programs focus on school-age children. We consistently work to ensure that the Museum and its offerings are accessible to a broad audience. Such efforts include participation in Art-Reach's Access Admission program, in which we commit to offering \$2 admission for up to 4 people with the presentation of a state benefits card, and our Fund-a-Field Trip program, which waives the usual admission cost for classes from Title I schools.

Pre-pandemic, the Museum's annual admission numbers were generally around 30,000, including regular visitors as well as attendees to several special events offered each year and regularly scheduled STEM education programs. In 2020, we have welcomed about 3630 people to the Museum, including 354 through ACCESS Admission. That much-reduced visitation number reflects the closure of the Museum from March 14 to July 9, during which no visitors were admitted and no programs or events were held. It also reflects that admissions have been down since we reopened. Revenue from admissions in July and August was 70% less than the same period in 2019.

In a normal year, the Museum enrolls 100 girls in its signature education program, Girls in Science & Technology (GIST). They meet at the Museum two Saturdays a month from October to March to complete hands-on science experiments with the assistance of professional scientists and science educators. This year, we were able to pivot the program to virtual but only attracted 23 girls, despite a reduction in the GIST fee from \$100 to \$50.

4. What has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?

The Museum was completely closed to the public from March 14 and July 9, and all events and education programs during that timeframe were canceled. The four part-time staff members were furloughed in April; two returned to work at reduced hours when the Museum reopened and the other two positions were eliminated.

While the Museum was closed, the Executive Director used ongoing public health guidance to create a Reopening Plan that allowed the Museum to reopen safely when it was permitted to do so. That policy sets out guidelines--mask-wearing is required; surfaces are regularly sanitized; and all staff, volunteers, and visitors are required to utilize social distancing—and provides clear guidance on roles and responsibilities as well as links to additional information and resources. Discussions between the Executive Director, Board, and staff as that document was being created and regularly updated ensured a shared understanding of the new mode of Museum operations required by pandemic conditions. It also allowed the Board and ED to collaborate on the procurement of essential supplies, such as signage and hand sanitizer.

The Executive Director, Board, and staff have also had regular conversations about the economic effects of the pandemic. The ED continues to manage finances carefully and to apply for COVID relief funding where it is available. The Museum has received grants and enhanced corporate support that have helped to lessen the gap between revenue and expenses, and the ED and several Board members have created an ad hoc committee to further analyze finances and determine what other options exist and when to implement them.

We are also concerned about the educational effects of the pandemic, and have been working to provide STEM resources and programs in a way that is feasible for us and our audiences. During our closure, we used our social media to alert parents to STEM education opportunities and resources and also started the work required to pivot our GIST program from in-person to virtual. Now that virtual GIST is underway, we will use what we learn from it to move other programs online too.

We anticipate that a number of our usual revenue streams will be reduced or eliminated while the pandemic continues, including special event rentals and large in-person events like the gala and FamilyFest. We have also had to offer some rent forbearance to our commercial tenants. Despite these challenges, we are committed to adapting our operations as needed so that we can continue to meet our mission to educate and inspire our audiences.

5. What would this funding be used for? How does this demonstrate innovation and resiliency in dealing with COVID impacts? What would be the community impact of this anticipated funding? Why is it important to fund this now?

The funding requested would be used for strategic planning, which the Museum would conduct with the assistance of a consultant. The Museum's current strategic plan dates to 2017 and, understandably, did not anticipate the pandemic or its impact on the organization. Now that we have seen how quickly and severely a situation like this can affect our organization, we want to use strategic planning to carefully plan for our recovery, for long-term sustainability, and for increasing our positive impact on the community.

The Museum has demonstrated its resiliency by successfully managing the 4-month closure and then reopening with a solid plan in place to ensure the safety of visitors, volunteers, and staff. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor the effects of the pandemic and related public health guidelines on our finances and operations and make short-term adjustments as necessary. Where we next want to turn our attention is to what happens in the longer-term, so that we emerge from the pandemic with a stronger sense of how the Museum can build on its legacy of providing quality STEM education opportunities, preserving important local and national industrial history, and attracting visitors to our region.

We believe that the process of planning will generate innovative ideas for strengthening our business model and our benefit to Chester County. The pandemic has strained our resources and the longer-term effects are still unknown; we continue to adapt to its effects to ensure the Museum's survival, but we want to do more than just survive. This time provides an opportunity to take a hard look at how we have been operating, assess what has and has not been successful, and put a plan in place that will allow us to emerge a stronger, more stable organization that has a deeper impact on our community. We are determined to learn from our current situation and to use it as a springboard into a sustainable, innovative future; strategic planning is the tool that will allow us to do so. Without the requested support for a comprehensive planning process, we are concerned that we will become too enmeshed in short-term needs to focus on the bigger picture for the future.

6. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget and this year's projected deficit? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?

We are seeking \$10,000 to fund the consultant-aided production of an updated strategic plan. Pre-pandemic, the 2020 operating budget was \$572, 290. The forecast prepared by the Executive Director for the Board's September meeting estimates that we will end the year at \$301,000 in revenue, with an operating deficit of approximately \$7900. The deficit is significantly larger when depreciation is factored in; see attached audit for impact of depreciation on last year's figures.

The Museum's goal is to have a completed strategic plan approved by the Board before the Museum's 25th anniversary on October 18, 2021. We have already begun compiling materials to assist us in the process, including sample Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and information from other local nonprofits about the consultants and processes they have used for planning. We would begin preparing our own RFP as soon as we were notified that our application for this grant was successful, with the goal to release it, receive responses, interview interested consultants, and select one within the first quarter of 2021.

Please e-mail all materials as a word.doc and/or pdf to grants@chescocf.org:

This Innovation & Resiliency Fund Grant Request cover sheet & brief narrative
Current annual operating budget & most recent audit
501c3 determination letter
Current strategic plan. If none, explain why your nonprofit doesn't have a plan.
Support materials that strengthen the urgency of this funding request + indicate that your nonprofit is innovative and resilient (ie: COVID best practice research findings, consultant proposal/s, bids for COVID-related materials & equipment, etc.)

- Proposals will only be accepted by e-mail, on this grant form available at <https://chescocf.org/covidgrant/>
 - Receipt of grant proposals will be confirmed by e-mail.
- Grant proposals will be posted on the Community Foundation's website, in order to share with fund advisors, donors, grant panelists, and other funding sources.
 - Grant proposals will be reviewed weekly.
- We estimate grants awards will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.
- For awarded grants, a written report on use and impact of this funding will be due within 6 months.

Please direct questions about **ChesCo Nonprofit Innovation & Resiliency Grants** to

Chester County Community Foundation
28 W. Market Street, The Lincoln Building
West Chester, PA 19382

www.chescocf.org
grants@chescocf.org 610.696.8211